



Los Angeles County AUDIT COMMITTEE

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ADOPTED

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

September 18, 2012

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The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Sachi A. Hamai
SACHI A. HAMAI
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Supervisors:

SUNSET REVIEW FOR THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE COUNTY ARBORETA AND BOTANIC GARDENS (ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS) (3 VOTES)

SUBJECT

Request to extend the sunset review date for the Board of Governors of the County Arboreta and Botanic Gardens (BOG) to June 30, 2013; and instruct the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to work with County Counsel to amend the County Code Chapter 2.26, related to the meeting schedule.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

1. Extend the BOG sunset review date to June 30, 2013.
2. Instruct the DPR to work with County Counsel to amend the Los Angeles County Code Chapter 2.26 to add a section specifying how often the BOG should meet.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

At its meeting held August 16, 2012, the Los Angeles County Audit Committee considered and approved the attached recommendations of the Auditor-Controller.

The BOG was established in 1992 by the Board of Supervisors (Board) pursuant to Los Angeles County Code Chapter 2.26. The BOG advises and provides support to the Board and the Director of DPR on the general management of the County's Arboreta and Botanic Gardens. The BOG's Fact Sheet is maintained by the Executive Office of the Board and indicates the BOG should meet monthly; however in June 2002, the Board approved changing the BOG's meeting frequency from

monthly to quarterly.

Because the BOG's meeting frequency is not stated in the County Code, it is recommended that DPR work with County Counsel to revise the County Code to include meeting frequency requirements.

During this review period, the Commission noted the following accomplishments:

- Advised DPR to offer discount memberships on the Groupon website, which features daily discounts to local businesses. One of the County gardens offered discount memberships and sold approximately 1,800 memberships.
- Developed a program for National Public Gardens Day to promote the value of the County's Arboreta and Botanic Gardens. The BOG is working with DPR to prepare a press release to advertise the event.
- Suggested DPR work with garden foundations to offer free admission certificates to the gardens as an auction item for local fundraisers. The admission certificates would be funded by the garden foundations, and would help publicize the gardens and possibly increase membership/admissions revenue.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

The BOG members do not receive compensation for their service. However, during Fiscal Year 2010-11, DPR estimated that they expended approximately \$5,600 for staff support, mileage, and services and supplies.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The BOG has 15 members, three appointed by each Supervisor. The Auditor-Controller noted in prior sunset reviews in 1995 and 2001 that the BOG had unsatisfactory meeting attendance. The BOG met 12 times between January 2009 and December 2011 with an average attendance of 4.3 (29%) members. The Auditor-Controller confirmed 4.7 (31%) of the 15 BOG positions were vacant during the review period and this contributed to the BOG's low average attendance. The BOG has indicated that it will work with the Board to fill vacancies.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

For the next evaluation period, the Commission's objectives are to:

- Improve meeting attendance by working with the Board to fill vacancies, sending meeting notices to members, and reminding members about the importance of attending meetings.
- Continue to tour gardens on a quarterly basis to stay informed about upcoming garden events, new projects, and facility developments.
- Continue to advise DPR on ways to promote the County's Arboreta and Botanic Gardens to the public.

The Honorable Board of Supervisors

9/18/2012

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'GC' followed by a stylized flourish.

GENIE CHOUGH

Chair

GC:ld

Enclosures

c: Executive Officer of the Board of Supervisors
Auditor-Controller
County Counsel
Chief Executive Officer
Director, Department of Parks and Recreation
Chair, Board of Governors of the County
Arboreta and Botanic Gardens
Chief, Commission Services



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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WENDY L. WATANABE
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

JUDI E. THOMAS
CHIEF DEPUTY

ASST. AUDITOR-CONTROLLERS

ROBERT A. DAVIS
JOHN NAIMO
JAMES L. SCHNEIDERMAN

July 18, 2012

TO: Audit Committee

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor-Controller

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Wendy L. Watanabe", is written over the printed name and title.

SUBJECT: **SUNSET REVIEW FOR THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE
COUNTY ARBORETA AND BOTANIC GARDENS**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Audit Committee recommend to the Board of Supervisors (Board) to extend the Board of Governors of the County Arboreta and Botanic Gardens (BOG) sunset review date to June 30, 2013.

The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) work with County Counsel to revise the County Code to indicate how often the BOG should meet.

The Audit Committee instruct the BOG to work on improving the BOG's attendance. The one-year sunset date extension is intended to permit a reevaluation of the BOG to determine whether sufficient changes have been made to justify extending the BOG beyond June 30, 2013.

BACKGROUND

The Board established and has continued the BOG pursuant to Los Angeles County Code Chapter 2.26. The Board approved the most recent sunset review date extension in June 2002.

The BOG advises and provides support to the Board and the Director of DPR on the general management of the County's Arboreta and Botanic Gardens.

The BOG has 15 members, three appointed by each Supervisor. The County Code does not specify how often the BOG is required to meet. The BOG's Fact Sheet, which

is maintained by the Executive Office of the Board, indicated the BOG should meet monthly. However, in June 2002, the Board approved changing the BOG's meeting frequency from monthly to quarterly. Because the BOG's meeting frequency is not stated in the County Code, we recommend DPR work with County Counsel to revise the County Code to indicate how often the BOG should meet. After our review, we were advised that County Counsel and DPR had started working on changing the County Code to include meeting frequency requirements.

BOG members are not compensated for their service. DPR estimates that they spent approximately \$5,600 for BOG staff support, mileage, and services and supplies during Fiscal Year 2010-11.

JUSTIFICATION

The BOG met 12 times between January 2009 and December 2011 (four times a year), with an average attendance of 4.3 (29%) members. We noted in prior sunset reviews in 1995 and 2001 that the BOG had unsatisfactory meeting attendance of approximately eight (53%) and six (40%) members, respectively. The BOG indicated that its low average attendance is partly due to unfilled vacancies. We confirmed that an average of 4.7 (31%) of the 15 BOG positions were vacant during our review period. The BOG has indicated that it will work with the Board to fill vacancies. In addition, DPR will help the BOG improve its attendance by sending meeting notices to members, and reminding members about the importance of attending meetings.

Despite the BOG's unsatisfactory attendance, DPR management believes the BOG has an important mission, and should be continued. In addition, although the BOG's average attendance was low, the BOG fulfilled its duties. During this review period, the BOG's accomplishments included:

- Advising DPR to offer discount memberships on the Groupon website, which features daily discounts to local businesses. One of the County gardens offered discount memberships, and sold approximately 1,800 memberships.
- Developing a program for National Public Gardens Day to promote the value of the County's Arboreta and Botanic Gardens. The BOG is also working with DPR to prepare a press release to advertise the event.
- Suggesting DPR work with garden foundations to offer free admission certificates to the gardens as an auction item for local fundraisers. The admission certificates would be funded by the garden foundations, and would help publicize the gardens and possibly increase membership/admissions revenue.

The BOG's objectives for the next review period are to:

- Improve meeting attendance by working with the Board to fill vacancies, sending meeting notices to members, and reminding members about the importance of attending meetings.
- Continue to tour gardens on a quarterly basis to stay informed about upcoming garden events, new projects, and facility developments.
- Continue to advise DPR on ways to promote the County's Arboreta and Botanic Gardens to the public.

Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Robert Campbell at (213) 253-0101.

WLW:JLS:RGC:TK

Attachment

c: Gudrun Kimmel, Member, Board of Governors of the County Arboreta and Botanic Gardens
Russ Guiney, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation
Angie Johnson, Chief, Commission Services

SUNSET REVIEW
BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE COUNTY ARBORETA AND BOTANIC GARDENS
REVIEW COMMENTS

Mission. (Does the mission statement agree with the Board of Supervisors' purpose and expectations?)

The stated mission is as set forth in the Board order creating the BOG.
CONCUR.

Section 1. Relevance. (Is the mission still relevant and in agreement with the Board of Supervisors' purpose and expectations?)

The BOG advises and provides support to the Board and the Director of DPR on the general management of County's Arboreta and Botanic Gardens.

The BOG's mission appears to be **RELEVANT.**

Section 2. Meetings and Attendance. (Are required meetings held and is attendance satisfactory?)

The BOG met 12 times between January 2009 and December 2011 (four times a year), with an average attendance of 4.3 (29%) members. The County Code does not specify how often the BOG is required to meet. The BOG's Fact Sheet, which is maintained by the Executive Office of the Board, indicated the BOG should meet monthly. However, in June 2002, the Board approved changing the BOG's meeting frequency from monthly to quarterly.

The BOG indicated that its low average attendance is partly due to unfilled vacancies. We confirmed that an average of 4.7 (31%) of the 15 BOG positions were vacant throughout the review period. The BOG has indicated that it will work with the Board to fill vacancies. In addition, DPR will help the BOG improve attendance by sending meeting notices to members and reminding members about the importance of attending meetings.

The BOG's meeting frequency is **SATISFACTORY**, while the BOG's attendance is **UNSATISFACTORY.**

Sections 3 and 4. Accomplishments and Results. (Are listed accomplishments and results significant?)

During this review period, the BOG's accomplishments included:

- Advising DPR to offer discount garden memberships on the Groupon website, which features daily discounts to local businesses. One of the

County gardens offered discount memberships, and sold approximately 1,800 memberships.

- Developing a program for National Public Gardens Day to promote the value of the County's Arboreta and Botanic Gardens. The BOG is also working with DPR to prepare a press release to advertise the event.
- Suggesting DPR work with garden foundations to offer free admission certificates to the gardens as an auction item for local fundraisers. The admission certificates would be funded by the garden foundations, and would help publicize the gardens and possibly increase membership/admissions revenue.

The BOG's accomplishments and results are **SIGNIFICANT**.

Section 5. Objectives. (Are the objectives compatible with the mission and goals and relevant within the current County environment?)

The BOG's objectives for the coming period are to:

- Improve meeting attendance by working with the Board to fill vacancies, sending meeting notices to members, and reminding members about the importance of attending meetings.
- Continue to tour gardens on a quarterly basis to stay informed about upcoming garden events, new projects, and facility developments.
- Continue to advise DPR on ways to promote the County's Arboreta and Botanic Gardens to the public.

The BOG's future objectives appear **RELEVANT**.

Section 6. Resources. (Are the resources utilized by the entity in support of the entity's activities warranted in terms of the accomplishments and results?)

BOG members are not compensated for their service. DPR estimates that they spent approximately \$5,600 for BOG staff support, mileage, and services and supplies during Fiscal Year 2010-11.

The BOG's expenses appear to be **WARRANTED**.

Section 7. Recommendation.

EXTEND THE SUNSET REVIEW DATE FOR THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE COUNTY ARBORETA AND BOTANIC GARDENS TO JUNE 30, 2013.